Red Line/Blue Line Connector Project
Working Group Meeting #4

LOCATION OF MEETING: Boston Public Library – West End Branch

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: October 1, 2009, 3-5:00 pm

Working Group Members:
John Achatz, Beacon Hill Civic Association
Bob Biggio, Mass Eye and Ear Infirmary
Robert D'Amico, Boston Transportation Department
Jim Fitzgerald, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation
John Messervy, Mass General Hospital
Thomas Nally, A Better City
Jeff Rosenblum, City of Cambridge
Laura Sargent, Office of Representative Martha Walz, (alternate)
Ryan Tully, City of Chelsea
Leah Walczak, Historic New England
Blake Webber, Office of Representative Michlewitz (alternate)

Staff:
Kate Fichter, Executive Office of Transportation
Michael O'Dowd, Massachusetts Highway Department
Scott Peterson, Central Transportation Planning Staff
Mark Pelletier, STV
Mark Ennis, STV
Kristine Gorman, STV
Michael Sutton, VHB
John Gonzalez, DHK Architects
Regan Checchio, Regina Villa Associates (RVA)
Nancy Farrell, RVA

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This was the fourth meeting of the project Working Group concerning the connection of the Red Line and Blue Line at the Charles/MGH and Bowdoin stops respectively. This meeting provided updates on the project team's construction sequencing, an update on ridership modeling, and a presentation on the Longfellow Bridge project.

MEETING HANDOUTS:
- Contact List of Red Line/Blue Line Working Group and Project Team (updated 10/1/2009)
- Public Meeting Announcement flyer

Introduction and Initial Comments

Nancy Farrell, Manager of Public Involvement from Regina Villa Associates, opened the meeting and introduced Kate Fichter, Project Manager for the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT).

Ms. Fichter announced that the first public meeting of the Red Line/Blue Line Connector project will be held on October 26, 2009 at Shriners Auditorium. She invited participants to take copies of a flyer announcing the meeting and encouraged Working Group members to spread the word about the meeting.

Ms. Fichter also introduced the new representative on the Working Group for the Conservation Law Foundation, Rafael Mares.

Ms. Fichter thanked the Working Group for agreeing to change the meeting time to 3PM and said EOT would be establishing an upcoming schedule with new times and locations for meetings.

She then introduced Michael O'Dowd, Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), who gave an overview of the Longfellow Bridge Project.

Longfellow Bridge Overview

Using a PowerPoint presentation (see project website), Mr. O'Dowd explained that the Longfellow Bridge project was part of the 2008 Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP), a $3 billion program to reduce the Commonwealth's growing backlog of structurally deficient bridges. This program has multiple goals and objectives: (1) stimulate economic development and job creation; (2) save money by completing projects sooner; (3) complete projects efficiently and innovatively; and, (4) have transparency and accountability. The program will employ innovative techniques including disincentive contracts, design-build projects, project bundling, and single-phase construction.

Mr. O'Dowd noted the Longfellow Bridge project is a federally-funded, joint project between MHD and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The project purpose and goals are to (1) repair the structure; (2) improve the ramped approaches to the bridge; (3) renovate the Red Line reservation; (4) improve lighting and safety; and, (5) retain the structure's historic character. He added that the Longfellow Bridge sees approximately 28,000 vehicles, 90,000 Red Line riders, and a significant number of pedestrians and bicyclists per day.

Mr. O'Dowd reviewed the current conditions of the Longfellow Bridge then discussed the alternatives under discussion for the repair of both the Boston-approach and Cambridge-approach. He also reviewed the alternatives for the tower repair and the temporary repairs already being conducted. He finally reviewed the alternatives for maintaining Red Line operations while repairs are underway.

Mr. O'Dowd noted that preliminary design for the project was completed in May 2009. Currently, the project is in the final design phase that will continue to July 2010. He anticipates that construction will begin in 2011 and last until 2014. The Environmental Notification Form (ENF) was filed on March 16, 2009. The project is currently undergoing Section 106 Review as part of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Jeff Rosenblum, City of Cambridge, asked if the schedule would be affected if the Craigie Bridge project was delayed a year. Mr. O'Dowd said he believes the Craigie

Bridge will be on schedule for permitting. He did note that the superstructure drawspan will need to be completed in one season.

Mr. Rosenblum asked if the bridge's auto or transit traffic would be shut down during construction. Mr. O'Dowd said that some transit traffic would be shut down during the weekends, but vehicular traffic would be ongoing.

Mr. Rosenblum asked if the project would be a Design-Build project. Mr. O'Dowd said it is currently under consideration. MHD and DCR are soliciting the bids for preservation work now, but cannot determine this until the Cragie Bridge work is complete.

CTPS Update on the Project

Scott Peterson, Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), then gave a brief update on the work that had been done to date on the project. As of the meeting, CTPS had conducted a 2008 base year calibration[1] and an analysis of the No-Build Alternative for the study year 2030. CTPS still has to conduct a model run and analysis of Alternative 1 (Red/Blue Connector with an eliminated Bowdoin Station) and Alternative 2 (Red/Blue Connector with a relocated Bowdoin Station).

Mr. Peterson explained that CTPS is using the Regional Travel Demand Model Set (presented at the May 2009 Working Group meeting) for this analysis, which includes the MBTA's new fare structure, parking fees, and private shuttles.

Mr. Peterson then presented the results of the Existing Conditions Analysis for Red Line and Blue Line:

	2008 Blue Line	**2008 Red Line**
FY Annual Unlinked Trips	16,346,400	68,560,600
Average Daily Boardings	64,550	242,900
Highest Inbound Daily Boardings	Maverick	Harvard
Highest Outbound Daily Boardings	Government Center	Park Street
Highest # Daily Transfers	Government Center	Park Street
Highest # Drive Trips	Wonderland	Quincy Adams
Passengers who begin on BL and exit at BL	65%	
Passengers who begin on BL and exit at RL	10%	
Passengers who begin on BL and exit at OL	8%	
Passengers who begin on BL and exit at GL	17%	
Passengers who begin on RL and exit at BL	1%	
Passengers who begin on RL and exit at RL		78%
Passengers who begin on RL and exit at GL		15%
Passengers who begin on RL and exit at OL		6%

Mr. Peterson noted that the build alternatives may have the potential to reduce Green Line traffic. He also noted that the Red Line is more captive to Red Line markets than the Blue Line ones, whose users are more likely to transfer to other lines.

[1] Calibration is the process of estimating the parameters of the model in order to make sure it is replicating travel behavior on the highway and transit modes as accurately as possible.

Mr. Peterson also explained that for the 2030 future year land use assumptions, CTPS will be using the assumptions adopted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in 2007. Other assumptions for the 2030 transportation network are those highway and transit projects included in the most current Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Transit Projects included in the RTP are Green Line Extension to Medford, additional stations on the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line, and parking expansions. He noted that previous studies had included different projects in the RTP (such as Urban Ring) so the results may be very different.

Mr. Peterson said that the assumptions regarding 2030 service is to maintain existing 2009 headways (at 5 minutes) for trains and that the run times for the two alternatives will increase from 20 minutes to 22 minutes (Alternative 1) and 23 minutes (Alternative 2), respectively.

Mr. Peterson said the 2030 No-Build alternative analysis shows an increase in linked transit trips (9%) and unlinked transit trips (12%). Increases are also seen in ridership for commuter rail (23%), Blue Line (13%), Red Line (4%), and Green Line (17%). Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) is anticipated to increase by 17%. Average travel time is projected to increase by 6%.

Construction Sequencing
Mark Ennis, STV, then reviewed the construction sequencing phases and tasks associated with the two Build alternatives. He noted that constructing both alternatives requires five phases:

- Phase 1: Mobilization/Utility Relocation
- Phase 2: Northerly Tunnel Construction
- Phase 3: Southerly Tunnel Construction
- Phase 4: Center Arch and Platform Construction
- Phase 5: Systems
- Phase 6: Testing and Closeout

For the purposes of the project, the conceptual construction schedule is defined as beginning during the first half of 2012 and being completed in approximately the first quarter of 2017. The presentation included a detailed construction schedule and tasks associated with each alternative during each phase (see project website for more details).

Bob D'Amico, Boston Transportation Department, asked where the project team plans to put the elevators as part of the existing Charles/MGH station. Mr. Ennis said that space is tight, but it would be ideal for the Blue Line elevators to be placed within the pay area of the existing station. He said it would be hard to do this within the existing footprint of the station and the station's glass wall may need to be shifted out a few feet (while retaining the current architecture). Using the existing elevators is not feasible.

Laura Sargent, Representative Walz's Office, asked which sections of the tunnel would need to be constructed using cut-and-cover. Mr. Ennis said the sections were from New Chardon Street to the western end of the Government Center Platform. Egress shafts would be located in the Cambridge Street median at Anderson Street and at Ridgeway

Lane and a starter shaft between West Cedar Street and Lindall Court will accommodate the tunnel and station components and tunnel boring machine.
John Messervy, MGH, asked about the traffic impacts between North Grove and Blossom. Michael Sutton, VHB, said that the work zone in that section would occupy a very narrow footprint, almost entirely within the existing median.

Mr. Messervy asked if the fan room could be placed below North Anderson. Mark Pelletier, STV, said the exhaust grates were necessary to be located in areas outside of the roadway, but added that the team would investigate locating the room under a public way.

Mr. Messervy asked about the depth of the new tunnels. Mr. Ennis said the tunnels were located about 50 ft. deep (to the track).

A participant asked if there was any way to extend the existing elevators down to save space. Mr. Sutton said that it would affect the support structure of the existing station. Mr. Ennis added that the piles which are extended from grade down would be exposed up to the underside of the station slab while mining beneath the station. The unsupported height would be unreliable at 50 ft. deep.

Traffic Management
Mr. Sutton then reviewed the traffic management approach to support traffic through the various stages of construction. Mr. Sutton presented the conceptual staged traffic management plans completed to date. These plans depicted work zone and roadway alignments to support the following:

- Reconstruction of the existing Red Line bridge pier supports that border the eastbound Cambridge Street alignment at the existing Charles/MGH Station(two stages)
- Fan room construction on the east side of North Anderson Street
- Emergency egress accessway and hatch in the Cambridge Street median between North Anderson and Blossom Streets
- Air vent and grate in the Cambridge Street median at Joy Street
- Work areas to support tunnel and utility work between New Chardon and Court Streets

Decking support installation/Utility relocation: Mr. Sutton stated that due to the amount of traffic moving through this area daily, all of the other competing uses (pedestrians, on-street parking/loading etc.), the limited amount of right of way, and the close proximity of existing buildings to the edge of the right of way, that utility relocation and decking support installation will be completed utilizing full-time moving work zones along the parking lanes and sidewalks. This would also require single lane off-peak traffic period lane closures and some temporary pedestrian walkway diversions. However, two through lanes plus turning lanes would be maintained during peak traffic periods.

John Achatz, Beacon Hill Civic Association, asked what work hours are being proposed for these lane closures. Mr. Sutton confirmed that at this time they were proposing lane closures during typical off-peak hours as defined by the Boston Transportation Department which is traditionally 9:30am to 3:30pm. Mr. Achatz stated that this assumption created issues during the Cambridge Street reconstruction, and as a result,

the traffic data was completely wrong since hospital peak time is from 9AM-1PM. Mr. Sutton acknowledged that those times were peak for the hospital area, if not the neighborhood however it is not the peak traffic period for vehicles using the roadway which occur during the morning and evening commuting hours.

Mr. Achatz asked if the team was looking at closing North Anderson. Mr. Sutton said that the current plan is to close North Anderson as this additional space is necessary to support construction. The roadway would be reopened upon completion of this work.

Ryan Tully, City of Chelsea, asked if the venting system would be visible. Mr. Sutton said only the vent grate would be visible.

A participant asked if it was possible to remove Pier 7 (pier on southeast side of Cambridge Street eastbound at Charles/MGH station), relocate it or redesign its footprint. Mr. Ennis and Mr. Sutton said the team had investigated this, but would doing so would require significant alterations and would consequently require taking the Red Line out of service.

Truck Routes: Inbound trucks to the project site from I-93 would exit to Leverett Circle, continue onto Nashua Street/Lomasney Way. Access to project area would be provided via Staniford Street and outbound trucks would travel from Cambridge Street via New Sudbury and Sudbury Streets with access to I-93 from ramps in the vicinity of Haymarket Station. An alternative outbound route is Charles Street northbound to Leverett Circle

MGH Station Area Traffic Decking/Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) Installation: These tasks will require overnight and weekend roadway closures

Detour Routes:

- Cambridge Street Westbound (outbound): close and detour traffic at Staniford Street. Traffic will follow Staniford Street, left onto Lomasney Way at Causeway Street in the vicinity of TD Garden which becomes Nashua Street to Leverett Circle. From Leverett Circle, access is provided to I-93, Route 1 and Storrow Drive WB. Access to Charles Circle, Charles Street and Memorial Drive will be routed right onto Rt. 28 from Leverett Circle and left onto Land Boulevard. Local traffic will continue to access the area via Cambridge Street westbound down to and including North Grove Street.

- Cambridge Street Eastbound (inbound): Close Cambridge Street eastbound access at Charles Circle. Traffic will be diverted onto Charles Street northbound then right onto Blossom Street and back to Cambridge Street.

A participant asked how many weekends detours would be in effect. Mr. Sutton said he believed that it would take approximately five weekends on either side of construction.

Bowdoin/Government Center Station Area Traffic Decking/TBM Extraction: requires the implementation of a unique traffic pattern in the area bounded by New Chardon and Court Streets. Access will be maintained on Cambridge Street eastbound and westbound with detours for New Sudbury and New Chardon Streets implemented as necessary to complete the work. Access shall be maintained on either New Sudbury or New Chardon Streets at all times.

Mr. Messervy asked if the worksite would extend into the plaza of the JFK Building. Mr. Sutton said the decking and staging area is contained within the right of way and that some pedestrian access may be temporarily routed onto the plaza probably requiring temporary easements

Mr. Messervy asked if the body of the TBM machine was too big to remove it from the original point of installation. Mr. Ennis said the body is essentially the same size, but it can only move in one direction and concrete will be casted behind it.

Mr. Messervy requested the project team recheck the parking spaces in the diagrams because he thinks several are handicapped spots.

Mr. Sutton added that the project team had completed a full report about the existing conditions, including conducting updated traffic counts in the area. Mr. Sutton said that the peak flows were inbound in the morning and outbound for the peak period at night.

Mr. Achatz asked if there would be real estate takings associated with the project. Mr. Pelletier said it was possible that there would be temporary easements, maybe under the vent structure.

Public Comment
Ms. Farrell opened the meeting up to members of the public for comment. There were no comments. The meeting was adjourned at 5PM.

EOT Contract No.: STV_REDBLU
STV Contract No.: 40-14212
Meeting Minutes Prepared by: Regan Checchio, RVA